Apple Computer iWork '05

Presenter Display
Configure an alternate display to view presenter information. Include the current slide, the next slide, a clock, a countdown timer, and your notes.
Lorem Ipsum
Home Pages Keynote

- **iWork '05**
- $79
- Apple Computer
- www.apple.com

iWork '05 is Apple's new productivity suite. It bundles an updated version of the presentation application Keynote and a new word processor called Pages.

Pages focuses on layout and design; if the writing project you're working on needs to be a nicely formatted newsletter, resume, or term paper, tools for making it look good are always on hand. Page numbering, multiple column support, footnotes, charts, and watermarks are included in a clean and intuitive UI. When you open a new document, Pages offers more than 40 templates, including Club Newsletter, Business Letter, Three Panel Brochure, and even Restaurant Menu.

As you create a document, the Pages menu lets you add sections based on the template you have chosen. With the term paper template, for example, you can insert a chapter page, text page, or bibliography wherever you need it. If you need a TOC, Pages can create it automatically based on the formatting you've used. Headings become chapter titles, subheadings become sections, and so on, which is another great feature.

Pages doesn't offer all the features that Microsoft Word does, but Word has been adding features (and bloat) for more than two decades. For example, Pages doesn't have a change tracking feature, mail merge, indexing functions, or macro tools. Also disappointingly absent is the ability to do a word count on a portion of a document. (Pages can only do a word count for an entire document.) Although any one of these omissions could be a deal-killer for professional writers and word processing power users, average writers who focus on putting words on paper and laying them out might not miss what's not included.

An Export command lets you save your work in Word, RTF, HTML, and PDF formats. I found that documents with complicated layouts lost a lot in the translation to Word, HTML, and RTF files, and the importing application needed to reformat them. But Pages' HTML output is clean CSS-based code, which is far more elegant than the messy Web pages that Word generates.

Keynote is Apple's answer to PowerPoint. Like Pages, it focuses on presenting information with style. It offers what Apple calls cinema-quality effects, or transitions and animations, which can add a healthy dose of visual appeal to a presentation. These include burning-page and flipping transitions and animated text movement. Keynote includes 20 templates to start building your presentation, and they all look great.

Version 2 also adds a Presenter view that, similar to PowerPoint, lets you see notes, upcoming slides, and a timer on one screen, while the audience watches the presentation on a second screen. Keynote can also create self-running, interactive slideshows for kiosks or other automated presentations.

Keynote is easy to use compared to PowerPoint. Adding a page to a presentation is as easy as clicking the New button. You can change the page layout from a drop-down list of styles that fit the template and create between-page transitions by choosing an effect from a menu.

Both Pages and Keynote include a notable feature that's missing from Microsoft Office: printed documentation. There are more than 300 pages of clear and detailed information about the two programs. In addition, Pages and Keynote are nicely integrated with Apple's other applications. For example, you can drag an image into either program from iPhoto and then resize and position the image. Both programs also let you mask images rather than just crop them, so you can recover sections that you previously removed.

Of the two tools in iWork, Keynote is more mature, figuratively and literally, and can serve as a full-fledged replacement for PowerPoint. Pages' emphasis on layout instead of features for writing and editing could frustrate users who want to process words instead of making them look pretty. Still, home and small business users will find iWork '05 affordable, stable, and easy to learn—a refreshing alternative to Microsoft's tools.

iWork requires Mac OS X 10.3.6 or later running on a 500MHz G3 or later processor and a DVD drive. ▲

by Kevin Savetz

CPU Ranking: 0 = Absolutely Worthless 2.5 = Absolutely Average 5 = Absolutely Perfect